

JOB DESCRIPTION

Senior VSLA and Agribusiness Project Officer

Position title	Senior VSLA and Agribusiness Project Officer
Location	RAEOA (1Position), Timor-Leste
Reports to	Livelihoods Program Manager
Grade	5 Step 1
Salary	US\$810 per month
Position type	One year
Start date/timeframe	November 2023

1. Background

1.1 About CARE

CARE is an international development and humanitarian organization that has been working in Timor-Leste since 1994. With programs that extend across all parts of the country, CARE works with partners to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice.

CARE works with remote, rural communities and civil society partners to combat gender inequality, as this has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to create sustainable development outcomes.

Ensuring well-being and a voice for women and girls in rural, disadvantaged areas is at the heart of CARE's work. This is achieved in four priority areas of Education, Women's Economic Empowerment, Health, and promoting Women's Voice in society through development and humanitarian programs.

1.2 About the program

CARE International in Timor-Leste will implement an extension to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded HATUTAN Program, to build a partnership between schools and their communities to improve literacy, learning, health and nutrition for children and adults in the municipalities of Ainaro, Ermera, Oé-cusse and Manatuto. The program partners with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEJD) as the lead Ministry to strengthen pre-school and primary school performance in literacy, health and nutrition and support the full implementation of the government school feeding program. The HATUTAN Program also works closely with the Ministries of State Administration, Health, Agriculture and Fisheries.

2. The role

The Senior VSLA and Agribusiness Project Officer position will support rural communities to provide safe, healthy and happy homes for their family's growth and success. The VSLA and Agribusiness component of HATUTAN will: enable families to understand and practice good nutrition and hygiene at home in a space free of fear and violence; enable families to invest in the education for their children; boost farmers' ability to mobilize capital; and expand farm production. This involves mobilizing and training community members, particularly women, to form or strengthen Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in school communities, including continuing school communities targeted by HATUTAN previously and new school communities.

The Senior VSLA and Agribusiness Project Officer will provide overall technical leadership to the VSLA and Agribusiness interventions of HATUTAN program with a focus on improving incomes and reducing risk at the farmer production level for rural families to benefit. Specific functions of this position are to develop technical standards for quality programming in economic strengthening, ensuring integration with all HATUTAN program areas, develop tools and adapt guides for quality programming, facilitate capacity building of field staff and implementing partners in their technical area, and participate in management meetings whenever requested. This position is based in Oé-cusse with travel to Dili and other program sites.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

Village savings and loans

- Design and develop work plans for field operations in the agribusiness and village savings and loans sectors in collaboration with field staff and local partners.
- Ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality are considered at the planning stage.
- Ensure that implementation of field programs proceed according to approved plans and that timely corrective actions are taken.
- Facilitate Village savings and loans and Producer Groups linkages with Micro-Finance Institutions.
- Develop capacity of program or partner staff on operation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) and related initiatives.
- Oversee the scheduling and delivery of training to local VSLAs to build local level capacity.
- Orient program or partner staff on Village savings and loans methodology and conduct TOT on this methodology for staff.
- Compile and submit monthly program summary reports to the Livelihoods Program Manager including regularly updating the Village savings and loans group data.
- Provide technical input into Village savings and loans monitoring and evaluation (M&E) issues such as development of M&E tools.

Value Chain and Market Development

- Serve as the technical lead to design, implement and monitor field level trainings on sustainable agricultural practices and marketing activities.

- Work with the Livelihoods Program Manager to coordinate partners including private enterprises, Producer and Marketing Groups and Village savings and loans groups
- Provide technical support for the formation of producer groups or cooperatives along the key value chains and promote women's participation in leadership.
- Coordinate capacity development in organizational development, agribusiness, value chain, marketing and addressing gender barriers.
- Support Market-based Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development and establish linkages with business development services.
- Strengthen market linkages through value chain and market analysis and the review of producer and marketing organizations.
- Facilitate public, private and producer partnership forums (value chain actors, implementing partners) to address issues.

Knowledge Development

- Share lessons learned with field staff and community groups and apply these lessons in daily practice.
- Coordinate activities with Village savings and loans and Market development with municipal government technical staff.
- Produce short learning summaries to highlight key achievements and the impact of VSLAs on marginalized group members.
- Guide VSLA and Agribusiness Project Officers or partner staff to review monitoring data or field reports to reflect on lessons learned and make improvements to HATUTAN's support for VSLA members or farmers' groups.
- Coordinate regular reviews of progress with field staff, partner organizations and municipal government and propose any corrective measures.
- Participate in monitoring progress in any identified discriminatory social and gender norms.

People Management

- Supervise partner organization interventions (Oé-cusse) and a technical expert in Village savings and loans and agribusiness Development, applying process improvements in programs.
- Coach Project Officers and associated partners to improve quality of the program activities.
- Provide new VSLA and Agribusiness Development Project Officers or partner staff with orientation and training.
- Hold regular staff reflection sessions together with VSLA and Agribusiness POs.
- Promote learning across the municipal or regional teams.
- Identify any gaps in Project Officers' or partner staff understanding of the program and activities and implement capacity development plans to address.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Take on other duties as assigned by supervisor.
- Engage in emergency preparedness and assist in any emergency response as required.
- Promote a safe and secure work environment; foster a culture of safety and security awareness and consistently follow all CARE safety and security policies, procedures and directives.

- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equality, diversity and child protection.

3. Selection criteria

- University Degree in Agricultural Economics, Development studies, Business studies, Economics, Social Sciences or equivalent.
- 4-5 years' experience in community development with Village savings and loans, and agribusiness.
- Knowledge and experience in rural socio-economic development.
- Experience in developing training materials.
- Experience in facilitating trainings and training of trainers.
- Understanding and demonstrated commitment to the importance of gender and youth issues in food security, livelihood and resilience programming.
- Understanding of potential gender barriers in agribusiness and ability to adapt approaches. Proficiency in computer skills including experience of MS Word, Excel, and VSL database.
- Ability to work independently and within a team.
- High analytical and numeracy skills and strong attention to detail.
- Excellent writing and speaking skills in *Baikenu (Uab Meto)* is required, Tetum and English ability is an advantage.
- Excellent people management skills.
- Pro-active problem solving and organizing skills.
- Ability to ride a motorbike, and have a valid motorbike driving license is required